

REMARKS

Summary of Office Action

Claims 1-53, 57-108, and 112-164 are pending in this application. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 57, 58, and 112 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Schein et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,002,394 ("Schein"). Claims 3, 4, 59, 60, and 113 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Schein in view of Lawler et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,699,107 ("Lawler"). Claims 41, 96, and 152 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Schein in view of Kim et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,400,406 ("Kim"). Each of claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable subject matter has been indicated.* The Examiner's rejections and objection are respectfully traversed.

Summary Of Applicants' Reply

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164, and hereby expressly reserve the right to rewrite any one or more of those claims in independent form if its respective base claim is not ultimately allowed. The Examiner's rejections and objection are respectfully traversed.

Summary of Telephonic Interview

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview of February 22, 2006 with the undersigned and Evelyn C. Mak.

* No disposition of claims 5-40, 61-95, and 114-151 was included in the Office Action.

With respect to independent claims 1, 57, and 112, applicants contended during the interview that the claimed invention is distinguishable over Schein because it exclusively distributes a subset of current program guide data that is frequently requested to user television equipment in a continuous data stream, while obtaining program guide data other than the subset of current program guide data from a program guide server in response to requests generated by an interactive television program guide. The Examiner acknowledged that applicants' claimed invention was distinguishable over Schein.

With respect to independent claims 41, 96, and 152, applicants contended during the interview that applicants' invention was distinguishable over Schein and Kim because it distributes a particular unique identifier associated with a particular television program to user television equipment in a continuous data stream only when the particular television program is currently being broadcasted. The Examiner acknowledged that applicants' claimed invention was distinguishable over Schein and Kim.

Detailed arguments in support of applicants' position are presented below.

The Rejections of
Claims 1-4, 57-60, 112, and 113

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 57, 58, and 112 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Schein. Claims 3, 4, 59, 60, and 113 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Schein in view of Lawler. The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' independent claims 1, 57, and 112 relate to systems and a method for providing program guide data to an interactive television program guide implemented on user

television equipment. The program guide data includes a subset of current program guide data that is frequently requested. The subset of current program guide data is selected for inclusion in a continuous data stream. The continuous data stream exclusively distributes the subset of current program guide data to the user television equipment. The interactive television program guide implemented on the user television equipment obtains the subset of current program guide data directly from the continuous data stream for inclusion in program guide displays on user television equipment. The guide also obtains program guide data other than the subset of current program guide data from a program guide server in response to requests generated by the guide.

Applicants' claimed approach of exclusively distributing the selected subset of current program guide data using a continuous data stream advantageously provides frequently requested data relatively quickly (e.g., by eliminating delay caused by a client-server request). In addition, applicants' approach of supplementing the continuous data stream with a client-server system advantageously provides access to other program guide data without requiring a large amount of storage at the user television equipment. See page 5, lines 8-21 and page 17, line 23 to page 18, line 2 of applicants' specification.

The Examiner contends that Schein discloses all the features of applicants' independent claims 1, 57, and 112. In particular, the Examiner contends that exclusively distributing the subset of current program guide data to the user television equipment in a continuous data stream is shown in Schein at col. 12, lines 28-31 and 47-49, which describe transmitting current programming to a subscriber unit. The Examiner also contends that obtaining program guide data other than the subset of current program guide data from a program

guide server in response to requests generated by the guide is shown in Schein at col. 12, lines 47-60, which describes transmitting future programming to the subscriber unit. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The embodiment described in Schein at col. 12, lines 27-60 relates to a satellite that simultaneously transmits data on several different bands. See col. 12, lines 32-34. Schein states that

several channels can be modulated onto a single band utilizing digital compression techniques. A bit stream including the current programming is carried by all bands. However, future programming for different blocks of channels is transmitted on different bands. The blocks are transmitted in . . . a carousel or endless loop

Col. 12, lines 35-38. Thus, this embodiment of Schein describes a satellite that can transmit both current and future programming on the same band in an endless loop. Applicants' invention, as defined by independent claims 1, 57, and 112, patentably improves upon the disclosure of Schein by 1) exclusively distributing the subset of current program guide data to the user television equipment in a continuous data stream and 2) obtaining program guide data other than the subset of current program guide data from a program guide server in response to requests generated by the guide.

Lawler, which was applied by the Examiner for the alleged teaching of specific elements of certain dependent claims, does not make up the deficiencies of Schein in failing to show the claimed invention.

For at least the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 57, and 112 are patentable. Accordingly, dependent claims 2-4, 58-60, and 113 are also patentable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejections to claims 1-4, 57-60, 112, and 113 be withdrawn.

The Rejection of
Claims 41, 96, and 152

The Examiner has rejected claims 41, 96, and 152 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Schein in view of Kim. The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' independent claims 41, 96, and 152 relate to systems and a method for providing program guide data to an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment. The program guide data includes unique identifiers associated with television programs. A particular unique identifier associated with a particular television program is selected for inclusion in a continuous data stream. The particular unique identifier is distributed to the user television equipment in the continuous data stream only when the particular television program is currently being broadcasted. The interactive television program guide implemented on the user television equipment monitors the continuous data stream for the presence of the particular unique identifier, which indicates when the particular television program is currently being broadcasted. The interactive television program guide performs a real-time action associated with the particular television program when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream.

Applicants' claimed approach advantageously enables the interactive television program guide system to accommodate last-minute television program scheduling changes (e.g., program overruns or cancellations) that can affect a real-time program guide action, such as the display of a program reminder or the beginning of a program recording. See pages 38-39 of applicants' specification.

The Examiner contends that Schein and Kim, in combination, disclose all the features of applicants'

independent claims 41, 96, and 152. In particular, the Examiner states that "Schein is silent about receiving a unique identifier only when the particular television program is currently being broadcast" and applies Kim to make up this deficiency. See page 10, line 20 to page 11, line 19 of Office Action. The Examiner contends that Kim describes distributing a particular unique identifier to the user television equipment in the continuous data stream only when the particular television program is currently being broadcast, citing FIGS. 3 and 4, col. 1, lines 56-59, and col. 3, lines 22-24 for support. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Kim relates to displaying a message to the user five minutes before the end of the current program and the beginning of the next program, to remind the user that the next program is about to begin. See FIG. 6 and col. 3, lines 14-19. A controller extracts the current time and the start time of the next program from received packets 1 and 7, respectively, and compares the times to each other. See FIG. 7 and col. 3, lines 34-38. If the two extracted times are within five minutes of each other, the controller displays the title of the next program, which will be broadcast approximately five minutes later. See FIG. 7 and col. 3, line 46 to col. 4, line 6. Thus, data for the next program must be transmitted before the next program is broadcast, in order to provide the user with a five-minute warning in advance of the next program. Nowhere does Kim show or suggest distributing a particular unique identifier to the user television equipment in the continuous data stream only when the particular television program is currently being broadcast, as defined by applicants' independent claims 41, 96, and 152.

For at least the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 41, 96, and 152

are patentable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claims 41, 96, and 152 be withdrawn.

The Objection to
Claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164

For at least the reasons discussed above, independent claims 41, 96, and 152 are patentable. Accordingly, dependent claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164 are also patentable. Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164 be withdrawn.


Claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164

Claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164 were not discussed in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 42-53, 97-108, and 153-164 are patentable because they depend from patentable independent claims 41, 96, and 152, respectively.

Conclusion

For at least the reasons discussed above, applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration and allowance are therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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